

18 FEB 1999

Power

## LIBARAN POWER STATION BOASTS OF MANY FIRSTS

SANDAKAN, 18 Feb (Bernama) -- The Libaran Power Station here opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today boasts of many firsts among independent power plants (IPPs) in the country.

The RM260 million station differs from the other IPPs in terms of the type and size of the engine used, output efficiency level, tariff and other things.

Owned by Stratvest Sdn Bhd, a member of the Zil group of companies, it is the biggest investment so far in Sandakan district.

The 60mw-powered station, located at the Seguntor industrial zone, is the first in Malaysia to use the low speed diesel engine.

The engine, built by Mitsui Engineering and Shipyard of Japan, is the biggest and heaviest among all the IPPs.

Each of the four units of the engine is 10 metres high, 27 metres long and weighs 400 tonnes.

Station manager Zainal Karjah said they had to be brought from the nearby jetty on a 196-wheel road loader along a 800-metre road built specially for the purpose.

He said the station, built to overcome frequent power disruptions in Sandakan district, was also expected to boost economic development in the district with the abundant electricity supply.

Power breakdown, he said, has been a common problem in the district and the last major outage took place in May 1997 when supply was disrupted for three months.

Zainal said the station had a production efficiency of 91 per cent or 8,484 kJ/kWh (kilojoule/kilowatt hour), the best in the country.

It also has the lowest tariff rate of 16.1 sen/kWh.

The automatically-operated station employs 43 people of which 38 are locals.

Constructed using the build, own and operate concept, work commenced in May 1997 and finished four months ahead of schedule, enabling operations to start in December last year, said Zainal.

He said little foreign expertise was used for the project and it included the award of the Engineering, Procurement and Construction Contract to a subsidiary of Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor of Denmark.

Zainal also said that there were only two minor accidents from the time construction work commenced until now.

He said the Electricity Supply Department issued a licence to Serve Vest Power Sdn Bhd, another member of the Zil group, to operate and maintain the station for 21 years.

It thus becomes the second company in the country to be involved in power plant operation and maintenance activities.

The Libaran station channels its supply to Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB), owned 80 per cent by Tenaga Nasional Berhad and the balance by the Sabah government.

The station has a capacity to supply electricity to all areas in the district until the year 2005 which currently only require 37 mw of power.

In 2002, when the Sabah east coast grid is completed, the Libaran station would also supply to areas in Lahad Datu, Semporna and Tawau, said Zainal.

-- BERNAMA

AFY SK